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By Robert Deutsch, USA TODAY
FERGUSON: Students fear
jeopardizing jobs, he says.

An activist faces apathy

PROVIDENCE, R.I. —
"Sometimes I feel like say-
ing: 'Hey guys, doesn't any-
one around here care any
more?'" Chris Ferguson la-
ments.

The Brown University
sophomore is a leader in
Students Against Nuclear
Suicide, the group behind a
recent headline-making
campus vote to stock the
health center with "suicide"
pills in case of nuclear at-
tack. He signed a petition to
bar a CIA recruiter's cam-
pus visit and is a member of
several environmental
groups.

This fall's outburst of ac-
tivism at Brown has "polar-
ized the campus," the soft-
spoken 22-year-old says.

"Most students' eyes
glaze over when you start
talking about issues. They
have a different attitude
about how they're going to
guarantee a secure future.
... Their means to an end is
to work hard in school, do
all the things that look good
on a resume and get a good
job. To take a stand would
be a black mark against
them that would jeopardize
their future."

Ferguson's activism
evolved from reading, tak-
ing courses such as Perspec-
tives on Nuclear War and
"hanging out with people
who are concerned and just
talking about issues."

Now he's helping to set up
a campus "rainbow coali-
tion," bringing diverse stu-
dent and faculty groups to-
gether for political and so-
cial reform.

He's committed to work-
ing for causes he believes
in, but "I'm getting a little
cynical. Most people just
don't want to bother."